



Inside Ed's Head

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Edited by Sal Mannuzza

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Andrus Card Control

(A Book Review)

Summary: A book of novel card sleights, with a *few* tricks thrown in that illustrate how a sleight may be used.

Recommendation: Buy, if you wish to broaden your knowledge of sleight-of-hand.

Available from Vanishing Inc. eBook only.

<https://www.vanishingincmagic.com/card-magic-downloads/andrus-card-control-ebook/>

I met Jerry Andrus in October of 1979.

Jerry was someone to behold. I thought I was somewhat knowledgeable about magic but Jerry baffled me completely. His lecture was astonishing. Even more amazing was what came later in the dealer's room. Jerry would stand stock-still in front of a small group of people and place a card clearly into the center of the deck; he didn't switch it; we could all see it obviously protruding from the center. Jerry would slowly push it in and snap his fingers over the deck and wham, the card would appear on the top.

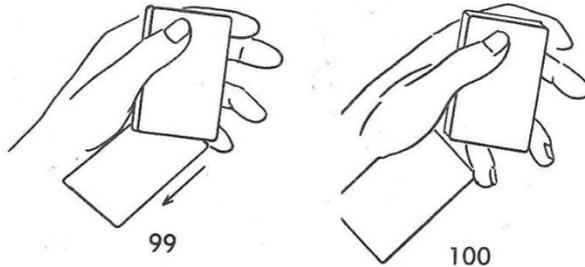
He told us that he used sleights of his own invention to perform these miracles. He also told us he used bridge-sized cards to perform them. He also told us that he would sell us the secrets of his card magic—but they would not come cheap. For the sum of thirty-five dollars (\$125 in today's dollars) we could purchase his two-volume opus, *Andrus Card Control*. The first volume is sixty-three pages of text—on 8½" by 11" spiral-bound paper with a relatively small font. The other volume is fifty-nine pages of

illustrations. There are often as many as thirty small line-drawn illustrations per page—1,042 illustrations in total.

I bought these books but, other than his method of getting a jog, I never was able to incorporate any of the material into my skill set. My early attempts were outright failures; I was too discouraged to move on. I considered the fact that Jerry did all these moves with bridge-sized cards. I wondered if I should try learning with the smaller cards. I decided against. I thought it would be a waste of time, as poker-sized cards were more readily available. Nonetheless, about once or twice a decade, I took those books off the shelf and re-studied them—I never made any progress.

Last year, I did it again . . . in a more methodical manner. I looked at the individual diagrams and tried to place the cards in my hand to see if I could *force* my hands to conform. In

some cases, I couldn't. If you look at the scan that I made of two of the diagrams on page 11 of his illustration volume, you'll see what I mean. I *can* take the position shown in figure 99. I can't, however, get to figure 100. I can *almost* get the card free of the deck but that's not



enough. Interestingly, the *width* of the card makes little difference. It does change the angle of the card to the left hand but it's the *length* of the card that makes this sleight impossible for me. I had read once or twice that hand size doesn't matter; anyone can perform all these sleights. I proved this incorrect for several of these sleights. Size does matter!

There were many more sleights I was probably capable of than not. This time I started working on some of those sleights and became intrigued. I found a couple I believe are worth working on. Perhaps you would also.

I had believed that the book had been reprinted and was available again. I guess it's gone out of print already, because I could only find an eBook from Vanishing Inc. As one *must* have both the text and illustration volumes open at the same time, I believe this would work best reading on a computer. I'm not how sure easy it would be to use this on a tablet or a phone as switching between programs is somewhat more involved than moving your mouse to a different window. The eBook is available for \$45, so you'd be getting it for about one-third of what I paid for it. The next two pages are the table of contents, so you can see what you'd be getting.

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What do I think of this book in general? On the plus side, there are many controls, steals, palms, etc. that you might find very useful. I'll quote Jerry here: "The sleights are designed for the spectator to be LOOKING AT THE HANDS AND THE CARDS WHEN THE ACTION HAPPENS." [Capitalization Jerry's.] The sleights are designed to get the MOST POSSIBLE EFFECT WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE VISIBLE ACTION to the spectators." Does this seem like a boast? Well, it ain't braggin' if you can do it. Jerry was able to do it.

I should also mention that some of these sleights can be performed *with a rubber band around the deck!*

Most of us don't design or use routines where we *want* the spectators burning our hands. To get the most effect from these sleights, you probably would want to redesign your routines—possibly your performing persona.

Of course, just because the move is *best* when the spectator burns your hands, it doesn't mean you *have* to use it under those circumstances. I believe some of the moves use some clips and palms that offer unique possibilities. You might want to know these moves so you can take advantage of them when you realize you need them.

There are also some negatives as well. The first is the layout of the book itself. Having the illustrations in a second volume is a pain in the patootie. Having two 8½ by 11 books open on a desk is very awkward. The books are spiral-bound; if you're careful, you can fold them over on their selves to reduce table space but then you have to be careful to avoid popping the pages out of the binding. Regardless, it is difficult to leave the text volume, jump to the illustrations volume, find the small image you need from the thirty on the page, and then find your way back to the text.

The text rarely describes what is going on—it just gives a reference to a diagram number. This means you usually can't get a sense of how a sleight works by reading the text—you have to go to Volume Two to understand the sleight.

I can understand why Jerry did it the way he did. In 1976, layout tools available to an amateur publisher that would let Jerry intermingle diagrams and text probably didn't exist. That is of little solace when you're juggling the books and trying to follow along with a deck of cards in your hands.

Many of the sleights in this book have angle problems. You have to be very careful how you hold your hands and arms to keep the "secret sauce" from

a spectator who is six inches taller than average. Once you master the mechanics of a sleight, it's probably best to video record yourself from several angles so you can know if there are any potential problems in that area.

Another detail that might give concern is that most of the controls, switches, and palms start with the selection outjogged from the deck. You may have the spectator insert the card himself but prevent it from being inserted all the way. You might have a card touched and outjog it yourself to display it or you might just take the card from them and insert it yourself. Personally, I've used all three of these over my magical lifetime. Now, in the days of Covid, having a spectator *point* to a card as you spread the deck and outjogging that card, is a very reasonable way of handling the cards.

One more thing that might dismay you, there are few tricks in this book. Jerry says he wants you to use your imagination. He does add a few tricks to display the usefulness of a sleight—only a few.

So, what is my verdict? I bought this book in October of 1979. Now, over forty years later, I'm still talking about it. If that doesn't tell you what I think of this book, I believe you should give up all attempts at mind-reading.

Afterword

There is a series of downloads teaching Jerry Andrus's material. It's available from Vanishing Inc.

<https://www.vanishingincmagic.com/search/?VIProducts%5Bquery%5D=john%20redmon#search-input>

You can also see a demonstration and explanation of one of Jerry's most famous moves, "The Panoramic Shift" on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX2hmnC2njA&t=707s>

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